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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/088,359

03/18/2002

David Coates

MERCH 2392

9088

23599

7590

05/22/2003

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EXAMINER

CALEY, MICHAEL H

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2882

DATE MAILED: 05/22/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/088,359

Applicant(s)

COATES ET AL.

Examiner

Michael H. Caley

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 13-15 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 13-15 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on 18 March 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group 1, claim(s) 1-12, drawn to an optical compensator having an O plate retarder and a twisted A plate retarder.

Group 2, claim(s) 13-15, drawn to a twisted A plate with a 250 nm helical pitch.

The inventions listed as Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons:

Claims 1 and 13 have in common a limitation to a twisted A plate used as an optical retarder.

Claim 1 relates to the use of a specific embodiment of a twisted A plate with a twist angle of more than 90 degrees combined with an O plate retarder, achieving an optical compensating function as suitable for a liquid crystal display. Applicant's description indicates that WO 97/44703 reports the use of a compensator comprising an O plate in combination with a planar A plate. Claim 1 makes a contribution over the prior art reference in that the A plate contains a twist angle of at least 90 degrees.

Claim 13 relates to a specific embodiment of a twisted A plate with a helical pitch of 250 nm, and a limitation to applications in which the A plate may be used as a

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negative C retarder. Applicant's description indicates that the films described in GB 2,315,072 exhibit a small helical pitch leading to a reflective wavelength in the UV range. However, a preferred embodiment of the twisted A plate with a helical pitch of 250 nm and including a twist angle of 360 degrees as described makes a contribution over the prior art.

In the absence of a technical correspondence between the limitations contained in the features of Claims 1 and 13, which define a contribution over the prior art, the relationship between the inventions which are identified by each one of these claims is not a technical one and the application does, consequently, not comply with the requirement of unity of invention.

During a telephone conversation with James Ruland on May 14, 2003 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-12. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 13-15 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Allowable Subject Matter

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Claims 1-12 are allowed.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

The prior art fails to disclose an optical compensator for a liquid crystal display having:

an O plate retarder as defined in Applicant's specification spanning page 1 lines 34-36 through page 2 line 1; and

a twisted A plate retarder with a twist angle of more than 90 degrees in which 'A plate' is defined in Applicant's specification on page 2 lines 1-6.

Conclusion

This application is in condition for allowance except for the presence of claims 13-15 to an invention non-elected with traverse. Applicant is given ONE MONTH or THIRTY DAYS from the date of this letter, whichever is longer, to cancel the noted claims or take other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144). Failure to take action during this period will be treated as authorization to cancel the noted claims by Examiner's Amendment and pass the case to issue. Extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) will not be permitted since this application will be passed to issue.

The prosecution of this case is closed except for consideration of the above matter.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

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PCT published application WO 97/44703 to Van et al. as an embodiment of a compensator having an O-plate retarder and a non-twisted A-plate retarder.

U.S. Patent No. 6,245,398 to Matsuoka et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,245,398) as having a twisted A-plate retarder as an optical compensator.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael H. Caley whose telephone number is (703) 305-7913. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Kim can be reached on (703) 305-3492. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 308-7722 for regular communications and (703) 308-7724 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.



mhc
May 15, 2003


ROBERT KIM
SUPERVISOR
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2000